

REMEMBERING CONGRESSMAN JIM JONTZ

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I wish to say a few words about a friend of mine who passed away on Saturday. His name was Jim Jontz. For 6 years, from 1987 to 1993, Jim represented Indiana's fifth congressional district in the House of Representatives. That is where I first met him and worked with him.

In 1991, the *Almanac of American Politics* described him as:

One of the most incredibly hardworking and gifted natural politicians who has routinely done the impossible.

Two years ago Jim was diagnosed with colon cancer that had already spread to his liver. We hoped at the time he would find a way to "do the impossible" again and defeat this illness. He fought that cancer for 2 valiant years, but he died on Saturday afternoon in his home in Portland, OR.

Jim Jontz defied ordinary stereotypes. He was a progressive Democrat elected three times by one of the most conservative areas in the country to represent them in Congress. People used to wonder all the time how that was possible. I have some ideas. For one thing, Jim had a flair for trademarks. He was famous for riding his sister's rusty blue Schwinn with mismatched tires in parades.

Jim also practiced a very personal style of politics—something he learned from his days as a grassroots organizer. He ran what he called "shoe leather" campaigns. His goal in every campaign was to knock on as many doors and speak to as many people as possible. He owned four pairs of shoes that he rotated in and out of at a local repair shop every week. That is how much shoe leather he put into his job. His campaign signs were always shaped like shoes.

Most importantly, Jim Jontz was a bridge builder. There is a school of politics that says the way you win campaigns is to divide people up into groups and pit them against one another. Jim was a master of a different and better kind of politics. He wanted to build bridges and understanding between groups that too often saw themselves as enemies: organized labor and environmentalists, and family farmers and environmentalists. He was always trying to find some common ground. He cared deeply about preserving the land and family farms and he believed the best way to preserve family farms was to help farmers be better stewards of the land. That seemed like a strange idea to some people 25 years ago. Today, it surely makes sense.

Because of his bridge-building abilities, Jim was tapped to mediate disputes between farmers and environmentalists during negotiations for the 1990 farm bill. One result was a wetlands protection program that won strong support from farmers, environmentalists, and sportsmen. That program has saved many family farms, preserved the natural beauty of our

land, and protected our clean water. It is part of the great legacy Jim Jontz leaves.

In addition to his important work on the House Agriculture Committee, Jim served on the Education and Labor Committee, the House Select Committee on Aging, and on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. On Veterans' Affairs, he worked with another brave man—my closest friend when I came to Congress and for so many years—Lane Evans. They worked to help veterans living with one of the most common but least understood injuries of war: post-traumatic stress disorder. Those efforts are part of Jim's legacy that we are relying on today while so many of our soldiers come back from Iraq and Afghanistan trying to conquer the demons in their minds from that experience.

As everyone who knew Jim also knew, he was deeply committed to preserving the ancient forests in the Pacific Northwest. That commitment earned him the support of celebrities and common folk as well who shared his love for America's natural treasures. It also won him the enmity of powerful logging interests and their supporters in Congress.

During the debate of the 1990 farm bill, Jim offered an amendment that would have prevented logging of ancient forests and national parks. A powerful House member of the other party retaliated by drafting legislation that would have allowed the Federal Government to create a 1-million acre national forest smack dab in the middle of Jim's congressional district.

In the end, Jim's efforts to save old-growth forests probably ended his career in Congress. The timber industry targeted him for defeat when he ran for his fourth House term in 1992 and he lost, but he didn't stop. In 1994, he ran for the Senate, losing in his last campaign. In 1995, he moved to Portland, OR, where he continued to work to save ancient forests and preserve the Endangered Species Act.

In 1998, Jim was elected president of Americans for Democratic Action, a position he held for 4 years before becoming ADA president emeritus. His most recent project for the ADA was leading its "Working Families Win" campaign which focused on raising the minimum wage, providing working families with affordable health care, and other issues of basic economic justice.

Jim Jontz grew up in Indianapolis and graduated phi beta kappa from Indiana University in 1973 after less than 3 years with a degree in geology. He fell into politics by accident almost in 1974. He opposed a dam building project that he thought threatened his little community. He challenged the chief sponsor of the project, who happened to be the majority leader of the Indiana House, and Jim won. At age 22 he became a political giant killer. He also served in the Indiana Senate before being elected to Congress in 1996 at age 35.

Jim won that first race against the House majority leader by two votes. He believed he picked up those last two votes when he insisted on campaigning at 10 p.m. the night before the election at a laundromat that was still open. That was Jim Jontz—using every last minute to try to make a difference. It was the way he ran his campaigns, it is the way he lived his life, and he did make a difference.

I join so many others—not just from Indiana and from Congress, but from across the country—in offering condolences to Jim's family: his mother, stepfather, and his sister who lives in Chicago. He was a good man who left a great legacy. I am proud to have called him my friend. He will be missed.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

IRAQ WAR

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, as I come to the floor this morning to share my concerns about this country's disastrous policies in Iraq, our Nation is mourning the unimaginable loss of 32 people in the tragic and senseless shootings at Virginia Tech. The thoughts and prayers of every American are with the victims of this horrific episode, the deadliest shooting this country has ever seen. We are only beginning to learn exactly what happened yesterday. We may never know why it happened, but what we know for certain is that in our shared grief we will find shared resolve to care for the wounded, to comfort the families and friends of those who died, to support this university and its community, and to search for answers and hope this tragedy may never be repeated.

I have been a member of the Senate now for just over 100 days. I am here, and many of my freshman colleagues are here, because the people of Rhode Island, like millions of other people across this country, looked at the war in Iraq and saw something that needed to change. They saw hundreds of billions of dollars spent, much of it wasted on reconstruction contracts that were sloppily managed or ill-advised. They saw one after another in a succession of retired generals protesting the failed strategy in Iraq and arguing for a different course. They saw reports that the Bush administration had misused and politicized our national intelligence services to press a case for war that did not exist. They read books, chronicling a heartbreaking series of mistakes and misjudgments. They saw tens of thousands of American soldiers return home grievously injured, and mourned more than 3,000 men and women who will never return home.

The country saw one of the greatest foreign policy disasters of American history and demanded a new direction. The American people voted for change. They were sincere, sober, and correct in their judgment, and this new Congress listened, but President Bush did

not. Instead of committing to redeploy our troops from Iraq, the President chose to escalate this conflict. Now, instead of working with this new Congress to forge a new strategy, a strategy worthy of the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform, the President and Vice President are on the attack—on the political attack—not against the Iraqi leaders who are slow-walking us through this conflict in their country, but against the American people who have rightly questioned their failing policy. The question is this: How much longer will this President refuse to listen?

Since joining the Senate just over 100 days ago, I have worked to put pressure on the Bush administration to redeploy our troops from Iraq. In mid-March, as a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, I traveled to Iraq to get a firsthand look at the situation on the ground, to see the hard work of our dedicated troops, and to talk with our military commanders and with Iraqi political officials. In Baghdad, our delegation met with several of the officers leading America's military engagement in Iraq, including GEN David Petraeus, LTG Raymond Odierno, and LTG Martin Dempsey, as well as members of our U.S. Embassy country team. We also met with Mahmud al-Mashhadani, Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament, and National Security Minister Shirwan al-Waili. In my capacity as a member of the Intelligence Committee, I also met with members of our Nation's intelligence staff and their Iraqi counterparts.

In Fallujah, we spoke with GEN Walter E. Gaskin, Marine commander in Anbar Province, and other commanders of the Marine Expeditionary Force. I met three brave Rhode Islanders there: Kristie St. Jean from Woonsocket, Christopher Tilson from Providence, and Anthony Paulo from Westerly, all serving our Nation with dedication, courage, and honor.

On our return, we traveled through Germany to visit Landstuhl Regional Medical Center near Ramstein Air Base where our soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen, badly injured in Iraq and Afghanistan, are med-evac'd to receive critical medical care before their return home. MAJ Andrew Risio, who hails from Ashaway, RI, is helping provide care to our wounded soldiers in that facility.

The young men and women I met with in Iraq and their families have made tremendous sacrifices, and their expert performance and can-do attitude reinforced my pride in the American spirit. The security posture we maintain around our military bases is strong, and our troops are working hard to secure the cities and countryside of Iraq. The work of our intelligence and Special Operations personnel, which often runs nonstop through the night, is remarkable and exhibits a level of professionalism in which every American can be very confident.

The achievements of our forces in Iraq are serious—and here is what impressed me the most from our trip: So is their commitment that the Iraqis must assume responsibility for the security and governance of their own country. In nearly every briefing, at every level of command, the message came loud and clear that our military is highly focused on accomplishing a handover of security responsibilities so as to bring our troops home. As a young soldier in mess hall told me, the Iraqis “won’t stand up until we start to stand back.”

I do believe the Iraqis need more motivation to stand up. For instance, there is key legislation the Iraqi Parliament must pass that our military commanders believe is necessary if this surge is to succeed. They told me we cannot succeed in this military surge unless it is accompanied by a political surge, an economic surge, and a diplomatic surge. Critical measures to facilitate provincial elections, regulation and revenue-sharing for the Iraqi oil industry, reversing de-Beatification in favor of reunification, and restricting sectarian militias are all legislative initiatives that have stalled.

Iraq must take action and move this legislation forward and step up its own security presence. That will require real commitment and urgency, Mr. President. And it would be putting it mildly to say I was not reassured by the signals I received from our meetings with Iraqi officials. There is a serious disconnect between the urgency of our generals about this legislation, and the absence of urgency or energy on the part of Iraqi officials. One soldier I met put it in simple, homespun terms. He said: “If your parents are willing to pay for the movies and you don’t have to spend your own money, or if you can get your big sister to do your homework for you, who wants that to stop?”

It does have to stop and this Congress is taking action to make that clear. I was proud to vote with a majority of the Senate to pass binding bipartisan legislation to require the safe redeployment of our brave troops beginning in 120 days, with the goal of having the vast majority of our troops redeployed from Iraq by the end of March. I am also a cosponsor of the recently introduced Feingold-Reid legislation to continue to put pressure on the Bush administration to safely redeploy our troops.

Only the kind of pressure a decision to redeploy creates will provide the motivation needed for Iraq to take the necessary steps to assume responsibility for its own governance and security. An announcement that our troops will be leaving will encourage the Iraqis to step up and take their security seriously, will discourage the insurgents, and will send a message to the world community that stability in Iraq will no longer be the responsibility of America alone.

Last week, I had the opportunity to take that message directly to the Oval

Office. In a meeting with President Bush and several of our colleagues who had recently traveled to Iraq, I urged him to announce a redeployment and a change of course was the strongest force he had in his hands. I also gave the President letters sent to me from Rhode Island folks with family members serving in Iraq. Those messages said loudly and clearly that it is time to bring our troops home.

But rather than acting to change course, the President keeps playing politics. He has threatened to veto legislation this Congress passed to provide critically needed funding for our troops in the field. In our meeting last week, he said he was prepared for what he called a “classic political showdown.”

The question of what to do in Iraq is not a political fight between President Bush and the Democrats in Congress. It is a struggle between the President and the will and the good sense of the American people. It is long past time that their voices were heard.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from South Carolina is recognized.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 10 minutes in morning business.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— S. RES. 123

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. President, in January this body took a significant step toward reforming the way we spend American taxpayer dollars. While debating the ethics reform bill, Senators voted 98 to 0 in favor of my amendment requiring transparency for 100 percent of Member-requested earmarks. This was an early sign that Congress was going to change the way we do business here in Washington.

But since then, I am afraid my optimism has been tempered by a healthy dose of political reality. The ethics bill containing new Senate rules has been stalled, and its future enactment is anything but certain. In the meantime, the Senate has continued business as usual, as earmarking continues unfettered from transparency rules. The appropriators are soliciting earmarks. The WRDA bill is full of undisclosed earmarks, and none of the committees are complying with the anticorruption transparency requirements.

Upon notice that I was going to offer this bill again on the floor, the Democratic leadership of the Appropriations Committee just issued a press release